DEF 12-1 CHICOM

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REF: DEPT CIRCULAR 2081

SUBJECT: Chicom Nuclear Test

1. The Chinese Communists conducted their third nuclear test at 0800 GMT today. Peiping subsequently announced that

Drafted by: G/PM:RGarthoff:lsh Ext. 2579

Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: G/PM - Jeffrey C. Kitchen

Clearances:
ACDA - Mr. Weiler (subst) P - Mr. Magruder (subst) WH - Mr. Keeney (subst)
DOD - Mr. Yarmolinsky (subst) DOD/P - Gen. Liebman (subst)

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it had conducted a QUOTE nuclear test which contained thermonuclear material UNQUOTE.

2. At the regular noon briefing, Department press spokesman Wright read following statement: ~~XXXXX~~

QUOTE. Nearly a year has passed since Communist China exploded its second nuclear device. The latest test, which occurred today in Sinkiang, comes as no surprise. A Department of State spokesman noted, on April 28, that such a test should be expected soon. It was an atmospheric test, with a yield in the same general range as the previous Chinese tests. Further evaluation must await collection and analysis of the debris. This test is part of the deliberate, and costly, Chinese Communist program to acquire a nuclear weapon.

The United States Government continues to deplore the disregard of the Chinese Communist leaders for the desires and well-being of people throughout the world who may suffer from the ill effects of atmospheric nuclear testing, which most of the world has banned by adhering to the limited test ban treaty.

The United States reaffirms its defense commitments in Asia, and the assurances given by President Johnson on October 18,

1964, of our strong support to nations that do not seek national nuclear weapons, if they need it ~~agx~~ against any threat of nuclear blackmail. END QUOTE

3. Department is making no further comments on the test or on the Chinese claim that their test involved thermonuclear materials until we can collect and analyze debris from the test. In answer to questions, Wright indicated the test was in the range of QUOTE small to medium END QUOTE, after reporter identified small as meaning up to 20 KT and medium as 20 to 200 KT. We do not plan make further statements at this time.

GP-3 END

RUSK